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**HERITAGE**

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## OUR MISSION

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*“support heritage protection, stop politicization,  
and engage civil society”*

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Created with great foresight at the dawn of the modern conservation era, World Heritage has for some 50 years served as a beacon of hope, protecting the wonders of our world for future generations. But sadly, today this unifying instrument is straining under its success. With 1121 protected sites, conservation has taken second-place to list-making, and properties are increasingly threatened as politics overrides protection.

With its 50th anniversary approaching, concerned individuals from across the conservation arena have come together to re-think and re-envision protecting our World Heritage. We seek







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## TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACTS OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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The digital revolution is changing the ways in which people know, understand, use, and visit heritage sites. How is the World Heritage Convention addressing this historical transformation? How can collective knowledge and big data become tools for heritage conservation and foster its integration into comprehensive planning systems? How can IT support transparency in, and access to, decision-making and management processes of the Convention? How can digital technologies, including social media, promote heritage education, awareness, and support to the cultural and creative industries?

Within the theme of Transformational Impacts of Information Technology we aim to establish a robust network of organizations and professionals, and together put forth policy recommendations to the World Heritage Committee. Striving to not only inspire discourse but also action, we are exploring how we can use technology to monitor our World Heritage Sites.

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## TOURISM

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### Tourism and its impact on conservation

Tourism is often perceived as a threat to conservation of World Heritage. In fact, tourism is a platform and a vehicle for presenting heritage to the public, conserving it and guaranteeing its economic and social viability. Hence, tourism is in most cases a balancing mechanism that keeps and protects the heritage itself.

The main premise of the TOURISM theme within the OurWorldHeritage initiative is that defining the key principles of Heritage-Tourism reciprocal relations is imperative. Both tourism and heritage sites are exposed nowadays to critical exogenic and endogenic changes. Among these challenges are the ramifications of COVID-19, and the consequent global economic and social crises. Hence, we argue that it is imperative to conceptually and practically pave a way for a major review of these interrelationships. In so doing, we hope to deconstruct old concepts and







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## RECOGNISING DIVERSITY AND PROMOTING EQUALITY IN YOUTH AND GENDER

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Heritage values reflect the structure and history of every society, and evolve with them. This is even more true in our times, characterized by large migratory processes, diasporas and flows of refugees. How can the Convention effectively embrace diversity, and help counter the resurgence of nationalisms and hatred? How is gender equality effectively promoted in the life of the Convention, from decision-making processes to management and conservation at all levels? How can the Convention facilitate access to heritage for every member of society? How can heritage help to address poverty and unemployment among young people? How can World Heritage better connect and inspire youth and embody principles of intergenerational justice?

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#### LEADING INSTITUTES

University of  
**Kent**

 **Newcastle  
University**

 **Merging  
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## HUMAN RIGHTS

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The **human rights** dimension in World Heritage processes has been neglected from a multiplicity of angles, with serious implications for people living in and nearby World Heritage sites.

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary offers an occasion to reflect and provide tangible suggestions to remedy the Convention's lack of compliance with international human rights law.

This initiative includes webinars, a conference, and an in-depth study on human rights infractions associated with the Convention. Panelists from academia, museums, NGOs and civil society will discuss the current limitations of the Convention and what policies can mitigate cases where properties inscribed on the List have impinged on human rights. We will assemble the viewpoints of different stakeholders into a policy paper and propose a legal framework guiding future prescriptive requirements related to human rights in the implementation of the Convention.

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## DISASTERS & PANDEMICS

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Recent disasters and actual pandemic have exposed the fragility and vulnerability of our world heritage. These exceptional sites and pieces, which we would like to preserve for all humanity and future generations, do not exist in a segregated world. They belong to our social environment and our daily life. But at the same time, the World Heritage Sites are in danger! They are threatened by natural phenomena that attempt against their existence. The pandemic has revealed their fragility and how much the human presence in them is vital and necessary for their survival. How can we protect them and at the same time give them life and new meanings? If we hope for a future for them, we should stop considering them only as beautiful objects or places, merchandise for the tourist industry, and fully integrate them into the social and cultural dynamics of daily life. We propose to promote a great discussion around the world on the risks and effects of natural disasters and pandemics on World Heritage Sites. We invite Non-Governmental Organizations, Academies, representatives of civil society, and local governments to participate, to contribute with new proposals for public policies on the conservation and safeguarding of the cultural and natural heritage of humanity.

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**Centro UC**  
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## NEW HERITAGE APPROACHES

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Unsustainable urban change and expansion processes, climate changes, predatory tourism, protected areas downgrading, transnational exodus and the widespread consequential depletion of relations between society and nature, as well as socio-environmental and armed conflicts, bring new challenges to our collective heritage in the 21st century. New heritage approaches should inquire why and for whom the heritage sites are designated, providing meaningful narratives for the users to ensure their preservation. Gender, ethnicity, race and income are key aspects of diversity and inequality in the current geopolitical context to be considered. New heritage approaches should create living and integrated sites in a territorial and urban landscape perspective, articulating nature and culture, considering the tangible and intangible dimensions of heritage, fostering strategies to decolonize the notion of heritage, (re)interpreting its values and attributes through proactive strategies of conservation. Sustainable strategies should congregate the development of heritage education and social participation as instruments to enhance emancipation, citizenship and democratization of decision-making processes. The integration of heritage conservation in territorial planning

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UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL  
DO RIO DE JANEIRO

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African World  
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## SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable development in and around cultural and natural World Heritage sites has not so far been successfully promoted, implemented and monitored by the World Heritage Convention. How can sustainable development policies and practices be reconfigured to better reflect conservation practices? How can cultural and natural heritage management support sustainable energy? How can high standards of conservation be maintained, and development pressures harnessed to promote balanced heritage management frameworks?

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## CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

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### Climate Change and biodiversity

Climate change and the alteration of the ecosystems due to greenhouse gas emission are threatening both cultural and natural heritage in unprecedented and unpredictable ways. How can World Heritage be effectively protected and how can it serve as a model for heritage conservation worldwide? How can World Heritage support biodiversity conservation efforts? How can prediction of future impacts of climate change on World Heritage sites be improved in order to guide mitigation and adaptation projects?

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## HERITAGE PLACES AND MEMORY

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The Convention has provided a limited role to heritage places that carry important memory values for society, associated with historical or cultural events as well as with conflicts. Given their relevance for societies and communities, and their possible divisive character, how can these sites be represented? How can the Convention interact with other Conventions and Programmes in order to safeguard the values of these heritage places and ensure their effective and continuing conservation?

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## CONFLICT

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### Heritage in conflict

The Convention has been able to provide limited protection, though prevention, response, recovery and reconstruction, to heritage in conflict. How can the Convention better support communities in their effort to conserve heritage in conflict zones? What synergies can be mobilised with other international Conventions, Programmes and Partners to ensure more effective heritage conservation in times of crisis?

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## THE LIST: EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION AND THE SOCIAL ROLE OF HERITAGE

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The World Heritage List has dominated the life and development of the Convention without achieving an equitable global representation. This has contributed to the politicisation of the decision-making processes and has weakened the promotion of comprehensive heritage policies and practices. How can the Convention expand its role as a heritage conservation tool and how can emphasis on the List be reduced? How can the World Heritage listing processes better represent the diversity of the world's cultural and natural heritage? How can science-based tools guide the development of the List and the monitoring of World Heritage sites?

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## OPENING UP TO CIVIL SOCIETY

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One of the increasingly promoted principles of UNESCO's heritage programs is the emphasis on community participation. However, the convention's governance system is centered on State Parties interaction and decision-making and UNESCO is mandated to work with state institution and strengthen institutional building on national level. This system limits the civil society participation which plays a fundamental role in cultural and natural heritage conservation.

This theme revisits the old and new meanings of civil society, its participation in heritage governance and its role in strengthening democratic governance of heritage which would make the process of heritage management more participatory, consultative, and transparent. The main question that this theme addresses is: How can the decision-making system and the management of the Convention be democratised to reflect fundamental and inclusive change?

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